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SUBJECT: JERUSALEM MEDIA REACTION (9/03): DEBATING THE ROLE OF ARAB SECURITY FORCES

Main Stories:

Previews of the upcoming Syrian-French-Turkish summit capture front page headlines in all dailies. Citing international wires, Al-Quds and Al-Ayyam report that the September 4 summit will be held in Damascus on the topic of regional peace, especially, indirect talks between Israel- and Syria. The papers also report that both French and Syrian presidents confirmed separately to the press on September 2, that Syria, France, Turkey and Qatar will attend the summit.

All front pages carry news from a September 2 Israel Radio broadcast that Israeli Premier Olmert told Israeli leaders that now is the best time for Israel to conclude a peace agreement with the Palestinians. According to the report, Olmert's comment came during a September 2 meeting with Israeli Minister of Defense Barak and Israeli Foreign Minister Livni. According to Al-Hayat Al-Jadida, which leads with the news, Olmert proposed ceding 93.5% of the West Bank and 6.5% of the Negev to the Palestinians.

Quartet Envoy Tony Blair's September 2 meeting with chief Palestinian negotiator Ahmad Quray is front page news in all dailies. Al Quds leads with a photo of the two officials smiling in Quray's Abu Dis office, under a picture of Jerusalem. During the meeting, Blair reiterated his opposition to continued Israeli settlement expansion and stressed the need for tangible improvements "on the ground", including an end to Israeli occupation and a "real chance" for Palestinians to establish their own democratic state, according to reporting. For his part, Quray reiterated Palestinian opposition to postponing or excluding discussion on any of the final status issues, the papers note.

Al-Ayyam and Al-Hayat Al-Jadida run the full text of U.S. Consulate General Jerusalem's press release on Consul General Waller's

announcement of \$8.86 million in USG assistance to UNRWA to address budget shortfalls. Al Quds runs the text on page 3 with a picture of Walles at the Shu'fat refugee camp where he made the September 2 announcement. Local news websites also picked up selected parts of the press release and all media note that total U.S. contributions to UNRWA for 2008 have reached nearly \$157 million.

BLOCK QUOTES:

¶1. Independent Al-Quds runs an editorial entitled, "A Dangerous Legal Precedent" (9/03): "According to news reports, an American court has issued a ruling to impose a heavy fine on the Palestinian Authority for the 1996 killing of an Israeli-American by Hamas. This has established a (new) legal precedent... what we should do now is bring cases of Palestinian victims [of Israeli violence] before the courts around the world. There are plenty of Palestinian victims who are American citizens. This might be the most effective way to respond to these cases being filed by the families of Israeli victims. It would be good to raise a Palestinian voice, which has been silent until now, to express the pain of bereaved Palestinian families."

¶2. Independent Al-Ayyam runs an editorial by daily columnist Jawad Al-Bashiti entitled, "What is missing in the proposal to make it attractive!" (9/03): "If the goal is simply to establish new Palestinian security forces that can provide security for the Gaza Strip, there is no need to send Arab security forces there. Such Palestinian security forces can be trained in Egypt or any other Arab country and then sent to the Gaza Strip, including the Rafah crossing. However, if the goal is... to revamp the security forces

JERUSALEM 00001634 002 OF 002

and systems in a professional way, devoid of politics, and that goal is difficult to achieve without the help of Arab security forces, then there is also a need to send Arab forces to the West Bank as well..."